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## SITES IN PHILISTIA

During the next two days we visited nineteen villages in the Philistine plain, combing them for evidence of antiquity. As a result of our investigation it appears certain that the ancient Ekron lay at Qaṭra, instead of at 'Aqir, which preserves the name, but lies three miles to the northwest. The usual identification of Qaṭra with Kedron, a fortress built by the Syrian general Cendebaeus, in his war against the Jews, is demonstrably incorrect. At 'Aqir there are no antiquities, and not the sign of a mound anywhere; at Qaṭra there are marble pillars, the fragment of an inscription, and an important tell, with enormous masses of Græco-Roman pottery. This localization also agrees much better with the statements in the Onomasticon of Eusebius, that Accaron (Ekron) lay to the east of the road from Ashdod to Jamnia. In the Director's opinion, Qaṭra is a most promising place for excavation, the site of one of the most important Philistine cities, whose relations with Israel were always close, because of its position. Esdûd, ancient Ashdod, is another very promising site, since the mound of the citadel is occupied only on its southern and western slopes, leaving the higher and more extensive portions accessible to the spade. The expense of excavation here would be incomparably less than Ashkelon, since the extent of the mound is so much smaller, the ancient remains are much nearer the surface, and a railway station on the line from Haifâ to Egypt is only half an hour away. Besides, there is an abundance of cheap labor conveniently at hand.

## LIBNAH AND GATH

The last day was devoted to the region between Tell-eş-şâfi and Bethlehem. It is almost a pity that Tell-eş-şâfi was excavated, since the portions of the ancient site available for the excavator are so very small, and the meagerness of the results obtained has greatly dampened the ardor of the archæologist, so far as Palestinian investigation is concerned. It appears, moreover, certain, as will be shown in detail in a spécial paper, that Tell-eş-şâfi is the site of ancient Libnah, and that Gath is to be identified with the splendid mound of 'Arâq le-menshîyeh, eight miles to the southwest. Unfortunately, the latter tell has a well on its summit, but this would not interfere with the sinking of trial trenches, which could be done at very slight expense, especially since the value of the ground here is negligible. In connection with Tell-eş-şâfi, it may be mentioned that there are three fragments of a small limestone stele from this site in the national museum (installed in the same building as our library) which, in the Director's opinion, was a sculptor's study, representing the launching of a ship under the auspices of Sennacherib. Since the first publication of this interesting monument is not accurate, it will be republished, and the reasons for the interpretation and dating set forth. It is especially interesting in connection with the fact that Sennacherib occupied Libnah after the fall of Lachish.

## MAKKEDAH AND SHOCOH

From Tell-eş-şâfi, we went to Deir-ed-dibbân, which may be tentatively identified with Makkedah. The remarkable caverns here, used in Græco-Roman times as burial places, in Byzantine days as churches, and in at least one case as a mosque by the Saracens, were carefully examined

and the interior of the most important one photographed. Turning again to the north, we rode to Tell-Zakariya, which almost certainly represents the ancient Jewish city of Shocoh, as Bliss, who excavated it, maintains. Azekah may have lain at Tell-butâshî, some five miles to the north.

The results of this short trip show what is still to be done in Palestine in the way of archæological and topographical research alone. Certain districts have been studied until one cannot even hope for gleanings, while others have been neglected.

## A TOUR ON FOOT THROUGH SAMARIA AND GALILEE

On the fourth of April, Professor McCown, Dr. Dushaw, and the Acting Director set out from Jerusalem on foot, with two mukaris and two donkeys to carry the equipment. Our intention was to traverse central and northern Palestine on foot, a very interesting experiment if it succeeded without sacrifice of health. The whole trip lasted twenty-three days, twenty of which were devoted to walking, leaving three days for rest. Except at first, and on the rare occasions when we were able to find a European hotel or hospice, we subsisted on native fare, unleavened bread, cheese, eggs, and *leben*, with few variations. Oranges, obtainable in all the larger towns, proved a most welcome change in the monotony of peasant diet.

Except at first, when we devoted too much time to the examination of ancient remains and modern holy places in detail, we were able to follow our schedule without trouble. Our mode of travel gave us the advantage of being able to stop anywhere, and climb over precipitous tells, or through labyrinthine caves without worrying over the fate of our horses. Moreover, while one must regret that Transjordan is still unsafe for travelers, the fact that our geographical scope was somewhat limited gave us an opportunity to study certain districts in much greater detail. In this way we gathered valuable material for the topography of the Plain of Esdraelon, the Plains of Accho, Asochis, and the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. We each secured important matter for publication; Professor McCown devoted himself to the collection of Greek inscriptions, and the study of modern holy sites, while the director specialized in topography. We also secured some valuable series of photographs of ancient remains, tells, and modern shrines or welis.

Our first three days took us from Jerusalem to Nâblus by a circuitous route through the towns and villages east of the highroad. After a late start Monday morning we reached Anathoth, the home of Jeremiah, and Hîzme before noon, after which we examined the Jewish and Christian tombs near Hîzme, and studied the curious late megalithic monuments known to the peasant as the "tombs of Israel." What they may have been called in Israelite times is hard to say. After passing through Geba and Michmash, we reached Bethel, where we spent the night. The following day we visited Tell 'Aşûr, the highest point in central Palestine, where a sacred grove, damaged during the war, commemorates the cult of Baal Hazor (Baal of the sheep-fold).

April 7 our little party left Nâblus for Sebâstiye, where we inspected the ruins of Samaria, and went carefully over the excavated portions. For a few piastres a broken scarab of Tuthmosis III, along with some Jewish and Roman coins, was bought from an old *fellâh*. If really of local origin, the scarab raises interesting questions, though, as well known,